

My name is Daniel Smith, I'm 23 years old and I would like to share with you a bit about my journey.

I started swimming when I was 5 and absolutely loved it. From such a young age I knew that this was my destiny and won countless amounts of gold medals, broke numerous Australian records and was lucky enough to be compared to Ian Thorpe.

Unfortunately things took a turn for the worse quickly when I got an injury at the age of 17. Because my life had been so consumed with swimming, I now had an emptiness I needed to fill. I started binge drinking, partying and getting involved with the wrong crowd. One night I made the decision to drink drive and flipped my car with 2 of my best mates at that time, into a house with 1 of my wheels coming off, flying over the house and landing in the backyard pool. We should have been killed however we had miraculously survived.

After that I was too embarrassed and ashamed to go back to swimming. I started smoking pot. With my addictive personality one thing lead to another. Before I knew it I was doing ice, which destroyed every area of my life – family, friends, health, finances. I tried numerous rehabs but they never worked. I ended up becoming homeless and did what ever it took to support my addiction. I also suffered from anger, anxiety and depression. I eventually hit rock bottom and decided it was time to seriously do something about my problem. A friend recommended me to Transformations and they accepted me for how I was.

Through the therapeutic community, I was challenged in my behaviours through the rules and actually having to work for my recovery. It was the simple daily disciplines that helped me get back on track. Through group therapy I was able to share what I had been through. This helped me a lot with being able to hear from others knowing that they had been through similar experiences. I use to hide from conflict and avoid having to deal with it, which lead me to my addictions. The program helped me be able to deal with what was actually going on for me. The first part of the program helped me with my anger and resentment I had towards my self and others.

Transformations made me realise that I do have a purpose again. I got back my drive and determination to be a successful athlete. I have now been back in the water for 16 months and I just made my first Australian team to compete at the World Championships in Russia. My goals are also firmly fixed on representing Australia at the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

My true transformation came from having an encounter with God. In the program I opened my heart to God. From that day my life has never been the same. I have not turned back once. My life has been restored because He has filled that empty void I once had. Where I once had anger I now have peace. Where I had depression I now have joy. My relationship with my family has now been restored. I now have friends that care about me. As of the 1st of May 2015 I'm 2 years clean and I'm getting stronger every day.